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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR AF/S, DS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [ASEC](#) [LT](#)

SUBJECT: LESOTHO: TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION SUSPENDS STRIKE

REF: MASERU 196 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. On July 2, the Maseru Region Transport Association (MRTA) suspended their strike action during a continuing dialogue with the GOL regarding their use of government-owned buses for public transportation (reftel). Traffic returned to a semblance of normalcy on the streets of Maseru, and most businesses opened on schedule. The current round of talks, which have thus far not led to concrete progress, are mediated by the Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL), the Transformation Resource Center (TRC), Action Aide(AA), and Development for Peace Education (DPE). According to NGO sources, the meeting between the taxi association and the Ministry of Works and Public Transport was focused solely on technical issues surrounding the appointment of an independent mediator to resolve the dispute.

¶2. COMMENT: Normality appeared to return to Maseru on July 2. Ongoing talks were bogged down by technical issues before the GOL interlocutors left to attend a memorial service for the wife of Lesotho's former Prime Minister. However, as the taxi association suspended their strike, their negotiating hand appears weakened, and the GOL loses little in allowing the talks to be bogged down in petty details. It remains unclear whether the unresolved issues between the taxi association and the GOL will result in further protest action. END COMMENT.

NOLAN